BORKELBY'S FOLLY

ISSUE NO. 1 Summer 1995

NEWSLETTER

SHANTHA WITH CLE-ESHTA

FOR USE WITH "SKYREALMS OF JORUNE" RPG

Editorial Page 1
Wibble, wibble, wibble.

Introduction to SkyRealms of Jorune Page 2
Matthew Pook gives us an overview of Jorune and a history of the game's development.

The Politics of Burdoth, Part 1 Page 5
A discussion of the Drenn/Tauther system.

Kesler: A North Khodren mining town Page 9
A mini-campaign on the Khodre/Temauntro border.

The Weaponsmith Page 21
New Occupations and Skills.

Notes & Querrids Page 23
BF's Q&A section, but this being issue 1 there's rather a lot of Q and not much A.

Joruni News and Products Listing Page 25
Laugh heartily at my lack of contacts, plus capsule reviews of all 3rd ed material. Nearly.

WELCOME

WHY A JORUNE NEWSLETTER?
I decided to instigate "Borkelby's Folly", in the first instance, to see if I was the only SkyRealms of Jorune enthusiast in the UK. The fact that you are reading this proves that - contrary to my fears - I am not the Lone Sholari. My cup overfloweth, and then some. Jorune is still a minority game, even amongst role-game aficionados, so "Borkelby's Folly" is here to hopefully unite a few of us, and to engender an exchange of ideas, views, and unofficial Jorune material. If BF becomes nothing more than a talking shop for Jorunis, all well and good; if it becomes a genuine resource for Jorune gamers I will be delighted. In fact if we get to Issue 2 I'll be delighted!

WHAT AND WHEN?
"Borkelby's Folly" is a not a 'proper' fanzine (I have neither the resources nor the hardware), but hopefully it will be printed as often as there is material to fill an issue, or at least every quarter. This issue cost an SSAE, but I've yet to determine if I'll have to charge anything for future issues. Ironically, the more readers BF gets the more likely it is that it will rise in price. The production cost of issue 1 was about 90p a copy; this could become prohibitive, especially as I am currently in the Realms of the Unwaged. Contributors always get a free issue of course.

BF is typed on a clunky old 286 PC that processes information in geological time, and has a screaming keyboard-lock powerful enough to give me Vietnam flashbacks. Since the Post Office kindly lost a parcel containing an ancient mouse for this PC, I don't even have a workable DTP package. You'll have to bear with me on the drab layout of the newsletter and the odd hiccup.

WHO?
Many thanks to: Chris Baylis for the free ad in "Games Gazette", Dave Morris for his good advice, Matthew Pook for making First Contact, and Andy Langran for the front cover template. Special thanks to Julia Oatham for proof-reading and helpful suggestions.

The material presented herein in no way constitutes an attempt to infringe the copyrights and trademarks of Chessex or SkyRealms Publishing. "Borkelby's Folly" and its contents are not "official" material in any way. However, I would like to acknowledge a big debt to Fitzroy Bonterre at Chessex, who has kindly given permission to reproduce Jorune artwork.

YOU?
Contributions are gratefully received, in fact I'm counting on them. Comments and suggestions are nearly as useful, and I'm eager to gauge opinion of Issue 1 (be gentle with me). You'll notice that the larger map of Kesler is loose - this is to make it easier to look at while reading the accompanying text and map key. Cheers!

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SKYREALMS OF JORUNE An Introduction.

SkyRealms of Jorune

Andrew Leker, Miles Teves and Amy Leker.

Exquisite science-fantasy system based on a completely original alien world. There are three player races (varieties of humans) and 14 alien races, colorful magic, and ancient Earth technology. The 1st ed. was a one-volume book; the 2nd ed. is greatly expanded and includes the "Player Manual" (56 pp., covers character creation, skills, magic and combat); the "Sholari Guide" (72 pp., GM's book covering the running the game, encounters, intelligent races, alien animals, equipment and an over view of Jorune); the "Tauther Guide" (32 pp., a more detailed description of Jorune: history, geography, and cultures); a booklet of character record sheets; and "The SkyRealm of Kolovisandra"(16 pp., description of a flying mountain, a unique campaign setting). The entire **Jorune** series features striking art by Miles Teves.

718-010.1/744-84. 176pp SkyRealms Publishing,, 1984 (1st ed.).

718-010.2/784-86. Boxed: four books (72, 56, 32, and 16 pp.), booklet. SkyRealms Publishing, 1986 (2nd ed.).

The above extract is taken from "Heroic Worlds: A History And Guide To Role-Playing Games" by Lawrence Schick. The only encyclopedic reference to the RPG hobby it contains over 250 entries for individual games plus thousands of entries for supplements and adventures. For "SkyRealms of Jorune" (hereafter SoJ), it only has five and as you can see only the first and second editions are detailed. Heroic Worlds was published in 1991 and despite several reprints has not been updated since, that indeed, would be a task of Herculean proportions.

The reason I include the extract here is precisely because it details only the first and, more importantly, the second editions of SoJ. For many Jorunl's in this country, the second edition was their first exposure to SOJ.

SoJ was launched in the UK on a cold, dry day in October, 1986 when SkyRealms Publishing came to London and their own trade stand at Games Day '86. The game, with it's large eye-catching box, mystifying slogan of "Leave Your World Behind" and captivating art proved popular and sold out. I was there and wish now that I had bought a copy of the game, instead I bought a much treasured SoJ tee-shirt.

"Leave Your World Behind." It sums up everything about the game. A totally alien world with strange creatures and stranger abilities where you adventured to do daring deeds and fight for the common good in an effort to attain citizenship. Whole mountains floated accross the sky and around the planet flowed a stream of ambient energy that could be harnessed to your will. It was so unlike all the other games I had seen or played with their Earth-like settings, cultures and so on. Well, that is not entirely true, for there is one game to which SoJ bears some similarities and that is "Empire of the Petal Throne".

Like SoJ, Empire of the Petal Throne (hereafter EPT) is a game with cult status. It began not as game but as an exercise in languages, to which rules were added and only recently has there been published a decent set of rules for the game. The setting of the planet, Tekumel lost contact with the rest of humanity in it's ancient history, but far into our future, is the creation and brainchild of M. A. R. Barker, a proffessor of langauges. The planet of Jorune, like Tekumel, is also a colony of Earth, which it also has lost contact with. Whereas Tekumel has had to survive tens of thousands of years, Jorune has a human history only lasting three milennia or so. In both games there are strange, alien creatures and access to ancient technologies, although in EPT, it is treated as magic not actual Earth technology. There are probably many other similarities, but to suggest that in creating SoJ, the designers were ripping off EPT would not only be pure speculation, but also libellous as well . . .

Personally I like both games, but SoJ is my favourite because I have had the chance to play it. For more information on EPT, I would suggest the excellent fanzine, "The Eye of All-Seeing Wonder" or the novel "Man of Gold" if you can find it in second hand book shops.

The history of SoJ is far different to that of EPT. It is based on a personal campaign run by Andrew Leker. The game system he used was TSR's "Metamorphosis Alpha". This 32 page book described how players could explore the "Warden" a lost colony ship travelling at sub-light speeds, the population of which had degenerated into tribes of humans, and mutated humans and animals. Later this game would evolve into Gamma

World, now in it's fourth edition. Metamorphosis Alpha, out of print for over a decade and a half, has recently been resurrected by TSR as a sourcebook for their Amazing Engine game system.

The campaign evolved from Metamorphosis Alpha into one set on Earth and then onto a planet of it's own in 1981. The name of that planet was, of course, Jorune. Andrew Leker's sister, Amy, helped him form SkyRealms Publishing in 1983 and the company launched the first edition of SoJ at Gen-Con in 1984. This consisted of a single book, which would later be broken up into four books for the second edition.

The game itself described an alien world over three and a half thousand years into our future. Long ago man had developed the ability to travel to distant stars and Jorune was the first suitable colony they had found, but it was already inhabited: "Shanthas", tall, eyeless natives of the world able to master the ambient energy or "isho" winds that flow accross the surface of the planet. They readily allowed the establishment of a colony and it prospered with the support provided from home. The loss of communication with Earth after what was presumed to be a war, meant that the colony could not survive without certain resources and that meant expanding onto land that was sacred to the shantha. Facing little other choice the colony took the land and iniatated a war that destroyed the colony. Shanthic use of isho allowed them to strike through the colony's sheilds with devastating destruction. Mankind found itself to be on the losing side and in a desparate measure developed and released a plague that all but wiped out the shantha population.

In the three thousand years since the war there have been many changes. Humanity has endured much hardship to form it's own place of safety in the realm of Burdoth and it has also evolved. Alongside and sometimes against humans are the boccord, bigger and stronger, able to disupt the use of isho; and the muadra, smaller and weaker, but like the shanthas, capable of mastering the use of isho in order to cast dyshas (a cross between spells and psionics). Only humans though, can operate the powerful weapons and equipment found in the caches of Earth-tec hidden by fleeing colonists.

Stranger still were the other races found on Jorune: the fearful and xenophobic Ramian; the Thriddle, fig-shaped bipeds who control vast resources of knowledge in their libraries; and the iscin races. A scientist part of the original colony, Iscin was a bio-engineer who developed stronger and more intelligent strains of various Earth animals which he felt would not survive on Jorune - almost all native plant and animal life is poisonous to Earth life. Some of these, such as the Bronth, Crugar and Woffen, as well as the human races, are available to play as characters in the third edition.

Character generation was quite a lengthy process in SoJ with 4D6 rolled and the lowest discarded for twelve attributes. These are broken down into four groups and a bonus of 1D3 rolled for each group. Modifiers are applied for the race to be played. There is no intelligence attribute, what you know is derived from the education statistic which also represents points that can be spent three times: on career packages, practical knowledge and finally on developing a character's interests. Careers are quite varied from the typical soldier or thief, through to the scientists and innkeepers. Muadra must also purchase the dyshas that they know, although some careers offer them the chance to gain a limited number.

Although the generation of the characters has changed little in the transition from the second to the third editions of SoJ, the game system has. In the second you rolled character attribute checks and combat damage on D6; skill checks on percentile dice; and combat manoeuvres and dysha use on a D20. All this meant that the character record sheet consisted of four sides of A4 paper, which like many things for the third edition has been streamlined. The sheet is now a standard double-sided sheet of A4 and a D20 is used for all rolls except for determining combat damage and the initial attributes.

The notion of similarities between SoJ and EPT rears it's head once again when considering the classic

campaign for each game. In EPT, the players were simple foreign fisherman, arriving at the docks in the city of Jakalla. They must not only survive in the city, but also work to gain acceptance and possible recognition in the eyes of the native population. In SoJ, the players are natives of the human realm of Burdoth, who have decided to travel from their homes to the capital, Ardoth. There they will register their application for citizenship or "drenn" status, for only then will they have the right to own land, to vote and to ask for the use of Earth-tec. Once registered they are known as "tauther" and through their future deeds may gain the respect of individual drenn who may then support their continued application. Humans have the least difficulty in attaining drennship, with boccords and muadra finding it harder, and the Iscin races having the hardest time of all - crugar in particular.

In both these campaigns the aim is not for the players to focus their attention on the acquisition of wealth, bigger and better weapons or other resources, but primarily on attaining both social recognition and staus and how to live up to the standards of that status. Loss of face and honour can have a potentially devastating effect on your standing with others and in extreme cases can be dangerous to your health.

Just as important as being able to protect yourself in a fight, if not more so in some cases, is the ability to interact with others in the correct manner and to respect their cultures. So remember that thriddle only sit in friendly company (they are slow runners and they lose a few seconds in having to stand up), to always look a bronth in the eye and never, ever mispronounce "Chaun-Tse", the language of the Crugar. In SoJ there are language, etiquette and interaction skills for all of the intelligent races found on the planet and it is useful to at least one or two. With Jorune being so potentially hostile because of the number of volatile races, the failure to observe such rules can be a matter of life or death . . .

There are plenty of other options in both games for adventure other than that of gaining social recognition, though in EPT it remains the major focus of the game. In SoJ, you can investigate the ancient underground ruins of the shanthas with their strange technologies; explore the floating skyrealms full of hidden secrets or home to a band of the feared ramian; cross through the East Trinnu jungle lands, once again infested by raiding parties of the uncommunicative cleash; or travel in style to your destination, sailing through the skys on a Jaspian crystal schooner.

Jorune is a world with seven moons, it is so unlike our home planet of Earth, lost long ago. A place of mystery, wonder and intrigue. It literally is a chance to *"Leave Your World Behind"*.

I am indebted to an interview with Andrew Leker that appeared in issues #1 and #2 of the fanzine "Sholari". For a more detailed account of the history of SkyRealms of Jorune, straight from the horse's mouth, I would reccomend both of these.

Matthew. W. J. Pook.

SKYREALMS OF JORUNE MATERIAL (3rd Edition) IS AVAILABLE IN THE UK FROM:

Leisure Games
91 Ballards Lane
Finchley
London
N3 NXY
Tel: (0181) 3462327

Caliver Books
816-181 London Road
Leigh-on-Sea
Essex
SS9 3NH
Tel: (01702 73986)

Oberon Moles Postal Emporium
69 Atherley Road
Southampton
SO15 5DT

Plus any shop supplied by HobbyGames, Chessex's UK distributor.

OTHER USEFUL ADDRESSES

"Games Gazette"
(review magazine)
67 Mynchens
Lee Chapel
North Basildon
Essex
SS15 5EG

"Sholari"
(SoJ fanzine)
Joe Coleman
P.O. Box 12631
Berkeley
CA 94712-2631
USA

"The Eye of All Seeing Wonder"
(EPT fanzine)
Steve Foster
26 Western Lane
Balham
London
SW12 8JS

"Hellrider"
(Amber fanzine)
Jules & Karen
9 Sweet Briar
Crowthorne
Berkshire
RG11 6TJ

THE POLITICS OF BURDOTH, PART I

THOUGHTS ON THE DRENN SYSTEM

The most visible element of Burdothian political and social life is the Tauther/Drenn system, if not instituted at least codified by the current Dharsage of Burdoth, Khodre Dhardrenn. The reasoning behind this is given away in Companion Jorune: Ardoth (p.30) when we are told that Khodre was "...the first post-holocaust human to read Plato [and] Aristotle". I will attempt to draw some comparisons between Burdothian political theory and practice, and the models on which they are based. Go get a soft drink and some ice, this could get a little dry...

OVERVIEW OF THE DRENN SYSTEM

The Drenn system is a wonderful marriage of player incentive(s), and game-world interaction. For the uninitiated, a standard resident of Burdoth is classed as a Toth, with no special privileges under the law. That is contrasted with Drenn, "citizens" of the Realm, who have a number of distinct political and social advantages. Those seeking to become Drenn are Tauther, and the process is referred to as Tothis. Most PCs will be Tauther, if only to get their hands on Earth-Tec (which is not allowed to your run of the mill Toth). Prospective Tauther, travelling to Ardoth's Hall of Drenn, register their Tothis by paying for a copy of the 'Tauther Guide' (otherwise known as the players' handbook), a first-person perspective on what it means to enter and progress through Tothis.

Drenn are the only members of society allowed to hold land, vote in civic elections, have full representation under the law, and the use of Earth-Tec (taken by most PCs to mean weaponry). Take out the last item and you are left with a class remarkably similar to the "citizen" found in classical Athens (circa 400 BC). Unlike most Athenian citizens of Plato's era however, Drenn of Burdoth must earn their right to become a member of the elite. In this sense the Drenn system is a meritocracy, the fittest and most intelligent rise to take a full part in the political life of the state. The Drenn system is there to separate the wheat from the chaff (the coditch from the husks?) - not all Tauther will achieve Drennship. Drennship also carries responsibilities; amongst other things, Drenn must serve on local Kims and as military leaders in times of war. Note that the Burdothian state is on a near-war footing almost all the time.

The Drenn system exists to provide the state with its civic and military leaders. Positions within those spheres are allocated through election (by other Drenn) and by patronage (of the Dharsage and the Chell). These 'citizens' are fully enfranchised and have decision making powers, as did their ancient Greek counterparts. In their Kims and smaller Kimmits they run the affairs of the city.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE DRENN SYSTEM

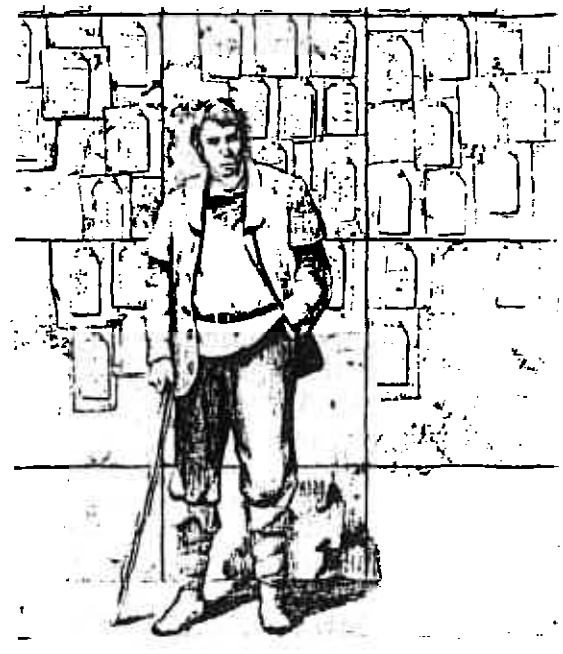
How are the Drenn of Burdoth maintained? This political class does not have the economic base that the Athenians had - slavery. The Burdothian state opposes slavery, and operates under a kind of laissez faire economics where the free-market is loosely moderated by the Office of the Chell. Most estimates put the number of slaves in classical Greece at anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000, and the number of full citizens at 25,000 to 45,000. Ardoth has been quoted as having an upper limit of between 300,000 souls (2nd edition) and half a million (3rd edition), with a human population of

between 52% and 70% of the whole. The three wings of the Ardothian military contain perhaps 4,000 Drenn, and a quick estimate of 'at large' Drenn could be anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000.

For a leisured class to exist someone else must toil on their behalf. Tauther provide part of the answer of course, working on Ardoth's sea wall, being commandeered by Drenn to perform tasks for them (could be an adventure in it, could be a spot of baby-sitting), and taking care of city sanitation under the auspices of the Chell. While it is true that Kim and Kimmit service pays a per diem allowance of 5 and 3 gemules respectively, this is hardly enough to live on (beggars make about 3 yules a day as well). Drenn are expected to sponsor Tauther and uphold the Burdothian codes out of pure patriotism. Yet, if Drenn are not supported by an infrastructure based on slavery, how do they earn a living?

Serving on Kims must hold some reward beyond the joy of bringing justice to one's fellow man (and non-humans of course). It would be naive to think that Kims would not bend a rule here and there to financially favour one or more of its members. The Kim protects the rights of the neighbourhood after all, and it could do this by favouring one business over another, or one citizen over his contemporary from another part of town. Since a Kim is also a court of law, the potential for a conflict of interest - if not outright corruption - is substantial. A comparison with 20th century politicians is easy to make - maybe Drenn have 'sleeping directorships' as well.

Competing Kims could create organised chaos in law-making, and any special favours granted to entrepreneurial Drenn could arouse the ire of the Klades. There is a slight hint of this already, as both the 3rd edition and Companion:Ardoth state that the Dharsage sees the more powerful Klades as a threat to his authority. Since the Dharsage has only nominal control of the internal running of the city, this may refer to Klade opposition to the Drenn system. Drenn are the only class allowed to hold land, this could mean that they own much of the valuable real estate in Burdoth and Ardoth. Maybe they collect rent from inclep owners and live on the proceeds. This creates servitude of a kind, perhaps 'slavery' by another name, just as in classical Greece it could be difficult to distinguish between an educated slave and a free Athenian artisan. There is more than one way to skin a cat.



Drenn are the beneficiaries of Dharsage and Chell patronage. The choicest jobs both home and abroad are available for the well connected. True heroes will get just rewards, but not every lucrative venture will be staffed with hard working and well intentioned Drenn. A few self-interested individuals will always be ready to exploit opportunities for loot, and more may find themselves corrupted by the privileges they worked so long to obtain.

DRENNSHIP AND NON-HUMANS

The Drenn system caters more to

pure-strain humans than any other race. Although the 3rd edition mentions this, it is not elaborated on in the Sholari Guide. For those without the 2nd edition, the minimum Drenn Points are 50 for a human, 60 for a boccord, and 70 for a muadra. No figures are given for the Iscin races, though I'd recommend 80 for woffen and bronth, and maybe as high as 100 for crugar. Muadra have been second-class citizens for some time, and it may not be wholly coincidental that the rise in dysha literacy parallels the rise in importance of the Drenn system. Both have come to prominence in the last 40 or 50 years. Just as boccord have an alternative to Drennship in the Ros Crendorian codes of Kree, so the Muadra may find greater social mobility in their own cultural system.

Is this pure prejudice or good political sense? A bit of both in all probability; keeping non-humans in Tothis longer ensures that they will be available as cheap labour, and it may be that more non-humans give up on Tothis as they see the humans outstrip them in wealth and prestige. Also bear in mind that a major benefit of Drennship is the access to Earth-Tec - this is not especially useful to non-humans, who will be unable to use any Earth-Tec that requires a scan of the palm print. This includes most weapons and a few other gadgets, so the primary reason for becoming Tauther will be different for non-humans than for descendants of the original colonies.

This would do the Burdothian state no harm. The innate racism of the system is built in and possibly premeditated. Disaffected non-humans may stay in the Realm, contributing to the economy and paying their cletch like regular Toth. Some non-humans - Thivin readily spring to mind - have no interest in the Drenn system, and are attracted to Burdoth for the opportunity to make money in private business. This too is important, as these races serve the same function as the "metics" or "resident aliens" did in ancient Greece - they will never be citizens, but they enrich the state with their trade and expertise. Up to 20,000 residents of Ardoth could be of this type.

THE ROLE OF TAXATION AND CIVIC LEVIES

The Drenn system may be partly supported by Tauther servitude, by revenue generated as absentee landlords, by patronage, and (indirectly) by the industry of Burdoth's "resident aliens". The non-humans serve the state for a much longer period of Tothis, and even if they make it to Drenn they will not be a drain on the Earth-Tec resources of the Dharsage.

Still, to support Burdoth's military machine (of which the Drenn are a large part) the cletch currently collected seems inadequate. A Toth family pays 25 gemules every four years; it should perhaps be double that, and annually. Certainly it isn't a lot to pay in comparison to modern income tax. The extensive use of licences and permits in Ardoth could also be a good source of revenue, and one would expect the "resident aliens" to pay generously for the protection and services of the city. As the Drenn system attracts more Tauther, so the costs will begin to rise.

HAS THE DHARSAGE SUCCEEDED IN CREATING THE "SUPER-CITIZEN"?

Does Drennship attract the right kind of candidate? There is no hereditary claim to the title, which along with the very nature of the system rules out the incompetent, but it does not preclude the unscrupulous from becoming Drenn. Tauther are endorsed by existing Drenn, and a certain amount of nepotism must occur. The Dharsage would have no need of concern if all these were archetypal ultra-patriots, but that won't always be the case. There

are severe sanctions placed upon disgraced Drenn, so the Dharsage must be aware that a few bad apples will find their way into the barrel.

Numerous hints in Jorune material suggest that the Burdothian state tends toward imperialism and its citizens are prone to jingoism; the "blaster toting Drenn with a bad reputation abroad" is perhaps the natural product of the Drenn system, and closer to many PCs than any other type. It's also easier to be a Drenn out on the frontier, in contrast to the internal politics of Ardoth where the Offices of the Dharsage and Chell, the Ardothian Council, the Kims, the Klades, the Shen, and the other elements of Ardothian society have to be navigated in order to get anything done. Stalemate is probably the distinguishing feature of Ardothian politics, especially since the Klein-Khodre Accord.

The easiest path to Drennship is through the military, the militias, and other martial occupations. Adventuring Tauther will not often be from the ranks of entris, learsis, and Iscin. In fact Iscin are apolitical, and rarely seek Drennship. This is noteworthy as it shows that the Drenn system is - at least in part - a political tool. The cerebral occupations are necessary for the governance and maintenance of the Realm, and it is these Drenn that will have a better time of it in projects controlled by the Chell. Perhaps the Chell will increase the number of Drennit (honourary Drenn), so countering the Dharsage's monopoly of the more gung-ho element.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The Drenn system favours humans, and especially those from the military. The patriotic, even bigoted, 'Defender of the Realm' is a reality. Much of the Ardothian Guard is staffed with such individuals, and they have been known to lack restraint. Integrating non-humans into the system is more problematic, though the Caji infantry shows that it can be done. Some non-humans benefit from being Drenn, but the 'Realm of Man' is just that.

There is a philosophical dead-end looming as well, in that trigger-happy Drenn will not make the best leaders in times of peace or negotiation. If Khodre Dhardrenn is hoping that the best will rise to Kesht and Keshtia, and thence to the kind of Philosopher-King envisaged in Plato's "Republic", emphasising combat prowess may not be the best way to go about it. The only Philosopher-King in Burdoth is Khodre himself.

There are tensions between civic Drennship and field Drennship, though the two may meet most amicably in law enforcement. Yords and daijic may be a happy medium. A third type of Drenn might be those merchants, shasts, and men of knowledge whose primary interest in Drennship is to line their pockets. There is some confusion regarding the foundations of the whole package, specifically the fiscal burden and responsibilities of the Drenn system. As a political philosophy it is only partly successful, and we need elaboration on the progression from Drenn to Kesht to Lystra to Sage (a whole new article).

I hope this article (despite the rambling!) was of some interest. Parts II and III of the Politics of Burdoth will deal with the relationship between the Dharsage and the Chell, and the role of Klades in Burdothian society. I would be very grateful for feedback on the relevance/interest (if any) of this. Most players are perhaps only interested in the superficialities of Drennship, and the Tauther/Drenn system certainly works as a means of character advancement, but do Sholaris find this kind of in-depth discussion useful?

KESLER

A MINING ENCAMPMENT ON THE NORTH KHODRE/TEMAUNTRO BORDER

BACKGROUND : RECENT HISTORY OF NORTH KHODRE

In 3474, two years after the Ramian Invasion, the Burdothian state addressed the need for reparations to those cities and towns that suffered most during the attacks. With reluctance Saress Khodre agreed to mining operations in North Khodre, with the profits being used as compensation for Dobre, Lelligire, Sychill, and Sydra. For 15 years the Burdothian miners, crystal cutters, engineers, tec-tons, and support workers ranged across the North Khodren landscape, laying bare the crust of the planet in their search for valuable metal ore and crystal. For all that time Saress Khodre was nothing more than a figurehead in North Khodre. In 3489, three years ago, the agreement came to an end, and Saress Khodre officially regained full control of the northern half of her realm.

Loyal retainers and members of the Dharmery blood-line fanned out across North Khodre in an attempt to reclaim land and ascertain what parts of the abandoned Burdothian operations were salvagable and if any use could be made of them. But North Khodre had experienced the taste of a more autonomous existence than that offered by subservience to Saress Khodre. Marshalling under Tazzman, a human hero who had distinguished himself against the Ramian Gire, sizable numbers of North Khodrens resisted the re-annexation of their homeland. In 3490 there were clashes on Lake Dau-Uh-Dey and in the interior, and for a while it looked like there would be a bloody civil war in the Khodres.

Saress Khodre had underestimated the difficulty in regaining North Khodre. Khodre Dhardrenn, Dharsage of Burdoth, would not commit militarily to aid his half-sister. In fact he would not commit at all, and Saress surmised (rightly) that Dhardrenn saw this "local difficulty" as a check on her power. Powerful families of Carrisey, especially the D'Serris Family, took advantage of the temporary stalemate during the following year to move in for their own gain. Free-lancers of all sorts - crystal hunters, miners, merchants, gamblers, carpet-baggers, condrij, and githerin - chanced their hand in a land that was not particularly lawful or safe in the first place.

Rebuffed by Tazzman and his allies, undermined by the Families, and abandoned by Burdoth, Saress Khodre consolidated what gains she had made and planned her next move. Spies were sent out into North Khodre, covert strikes were employed against the unwary, piracy resumed on Lake Dau-Uh-Dey, Crugar raids into North Khodre (from Temauntro) suddenly rose, and Tazmann's personal guard were always on the alert for assasination attempts.

At the present time, in 3492, Saress Khodre's attempts to destabilize the North Khodren rebels are reaping more and more rewards. The Families are squabbling amongst themselves, Tazmann has not been seen in public (he is rumoured to be gravely ill), and it is widely acknowledged that a deal has been struck between Saress and some Crugar clans. The political situation is unstable, and observers expect Saress to make a decisive push for full control of the North in the next few seasons. Many North Khodrens expect this too - whether they will admit it publicly or not - and there is an almost palpable tension in the towns nearest the borders between North/South Khodre and North Khodre/Temauntro.

KESLER

The mining community at Kesler is one such town. Kesler was an ancillary operation to the Burdothian mining, a small settlement and way-point on the North Khodre/Temauntro border. Nestled in the foothills of the Dowtrough Mountains, two days or so by Thombo north of Kask, Kesler is undergoing a period of uncertainity and transition. There are three distinct groups attempting to maintain or establish a power base in Kesler.

The D'Serris

Jazmine D'Serris is the head of a D'Serris mining operation in the area. She and her siblings are distant cousins of the central D'Serris Family based in Carrisey. Jazmine is not as well connected as either she or the townspeople think, but in this frontier environment they are still the most powerful presence and the only source of 'law' in Kesler. All official licences to mine go through the D'Serris, who have been granted a concession in Kesler by the tinpot government in Carrisey.

The Kesler Klade

A fledgling organisation of some of the more entrenched inhabitants of Kesler and environs. They are chafing at paying the D'Serris for the privelege of mining and crystal hunting in their own backyard, and are attempting to establish a Klade or union to fight the D'Serris monopoly. At present they are split into two camps which has made concerted resistance difficult - those that wish to protest by peaceful and reasonable means, and those that favour direct, often violent, action. Treven LaLoosh is the nominal head of this group, though it is far from well organised and the drifters of Kesler are not especially interested in rallying behind the trader.

The Dharmery Agitator

Nimrod Whelihan is the Kesler barber and sometime learsis, but his true occupation is a Dharmery spy and agent provocateur. A loyal subject of Saress Khodre - and a fully qualified member of the Kirlan Truth Klade (otherwise known as the torturer's klade) - Nimrod is covertly involved in sabotage of the D'Serris operations and the encouragement of the Kesler Klade. Neither group knows his true identity or purpose. Whelihan will not readily blow his cover but he is first and foremost a Saress agent and, if need be, an efficient killer.

SIGHTS & SOUNDS

The town rests in a pass through craggy foothills and jutting rock formations. It is built on the dusty floor of North Khodre and surrounded by the red-brown rock of the Dowtrough. Entering from north or south one looks upon a settlement that winds around three outcroppings, and which contains enough ledges and contours on the east and west rock faces to house as many inhabitants there as occupy the space at ground level.

The poorest and least skilled prospectors spend their nights in the thombo tents and one-man caves on the slopes, tending small fires to stew gerrig or the odd live catch if they have gathered hilc. On nights when Launtra doesn't provide enough illumination these hicho-pits light the pass, broken only by the long shadows cast on the rock walls by those moving from tent to tent. In the high winds of Auss and Crith the clumsy or rusper-dulled can fall to their deaths from the ledges, but the wise sleeper will afix himself with a piton and rope to the rock wall itself.

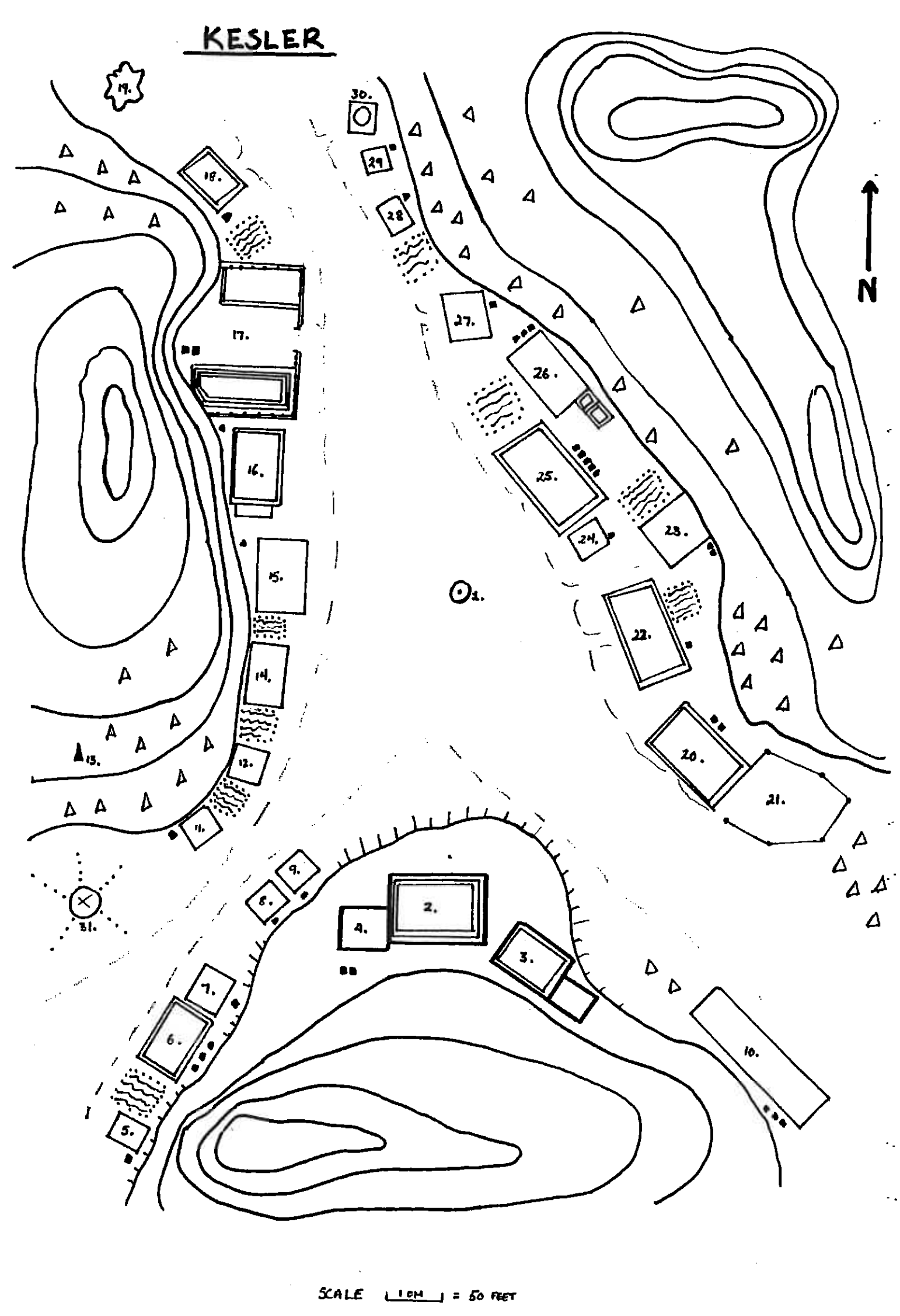
The floor of the pass contains the permanent structures of Kesler, hewn from Dowtrough rock, made from baked bricks, or constructed from wood brought from the North Khodren interior or Temauntro. The majority have wooden rooves, or else taut thombo hide, and a few have spikes to deter Crugar raiders from making the jump when their way is stopped by the heavily barred doors. Most buildings are close to the rock face to better withstand the winds that gust through the pass - and the sandstorms they bring - while others keep space at the back for a small durlig crop, which can take root even in this harsh soil. The central road is well worn by passing caravans of thombo-drawn carts and lothern, and can become a muddy rut in the brief but hard Eris rains.

When the weather permits, townspeople gather by the central sun-dial, sitting on its circular stone base or cross legged on the ground; gambling, drinking, and discussing their finds, the sho-sen, or the latest gossip. Those just in from a crystal or mineral hunt will be at the bath house, removing the dust and dirt of a trek into the mountains. The illidges and incleps will usually have some trade at any given point in the day; the laughter, cursing, and shouting can be heard easily as one passes from porch to porch. In bad weather, nervous mooing from the thombo corral echoes through the pass.

The population is mostly human, but there are significant numbers of muadra, a corastin labourer/bodyguard or two, and one crugar. Prospectors are typified by their sturdy boots, wide-brimmed sun hats, rope and climbing gear, digging equipment, thombo-hide bags, and the occasional boc-rod or other crystal based tool. Some work alone, while others form small bands that usually contain at least one caji to better navigate the isho weather. The artisans and service providers are Kesler's most permanent inhabitants; if all the town's denizens came in from the range at once, Kesler would only be able to house a fifth of them.

The dictatorial D'Serris are easily spotted, striding through Kesler in their teale coloured, quasi-military uniforms. High boots and high collars, peaked caps, and brynk hardwood nightsticks adorn the D'Serris dress. They are the most separate yet most powerful part of life in Kesler, safe in their white washed buildings on the northern rise, running the gambling house, and guarding their stocks.

The prospectors are not Kesler's only denizens: card-sharps, githerin, merchants, condrij, and claim jumpers wander the dusty streets looking to make as much money as the next guy.


KESLER
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SCALE 1 CM = 50 FEET

KESLER KEY

1. Sundial
2. D'Serris Offices
3. Gambling House
4. D'Serris Stables
5. Residence
6. Bathhouse
7. Barber
8. Residence
9. Residence
10. Flop House
11. Residence
12. Residence
13. Tent (Verian)
14. Outfitter (Lunt)
15. Illidge (Coombs Tomb)
16. Clep (Gideon's)
17. Inclep (Othello's)
18. Hideworker
19. Hawma
20. Outfitter (LaLoosh)
21. Thombo Corral
22. Stables
23. Caji Houser
24. Residence
25. Brothel (The Perfumery)
26. Illidge (Big Jack's)
27. Illidge (The Pit)
28. Residence
29. Residence
30. Well
31. Kerning Bay

KESLER LEGEND

Tents

Durlig Patch

Outhouses

Small incline

Roadside

Extra Storeys

Contour Lines

1. SUN DIAL
A stone construct brought to Kesler from the edge of the Doben-al by an eccentric trader. Residents use it as a meeting place and as a timepiece (for which it is not always useful since the shadows from the surrounding rock can engulf it). It is usual to refer to the shadow's length as a measure of time, eg. "Meet me when the shadow is two feet", "We'll move out at six feet." Caji more often keep time by the moons, eg. "Let's talk when Desti hangs in the West and Launtra is high overhead."

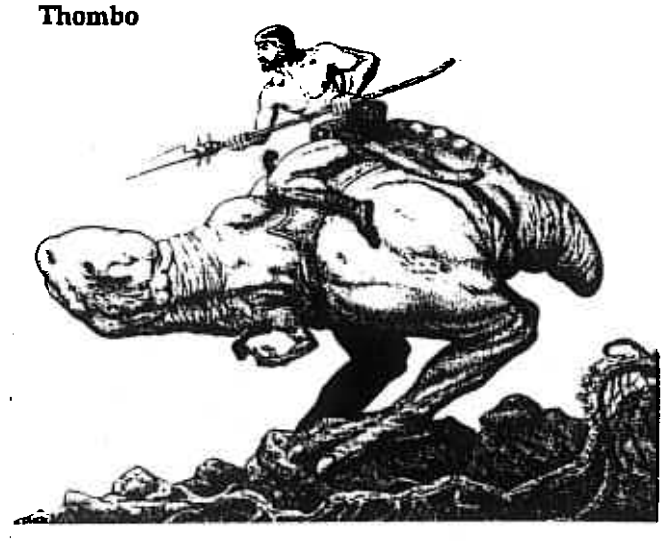
2. D'SERRIS OFFICES
Jazmine D'Serris runs the affairs of her business from here, licensing prospectors to search for ore, crystals, and limilates in the area (base price is 100 gemules). Finds must be declared and the D'Serris take a 40% cut; in practice this usually means that they take first choice of the load, including those items that are easiest to sell for quick profit. It is difficult not to deal with them, as they have the most secure strongboxes and depositories in the town (plus the armament to protect them) and an exclusive deal with the monthly caravan out of Auklin. Goods are transported to Carissey under heavy Corastin and human condrij guard. The D'Serris are also the only real law in Kesler, and will protect their concerns with vigour. Keslerites can at least expect the D'Serris to defend them in conflicts with outsiders or newcomers. Jazmine is usually accompanied by at least three kinsmen.

Laslo D'Serris assesses the value of finds, he will never evaluate goods without bodyguards. Laslo also helps Jazmine settle claims and other disputes that impact on their profit margin. It is Laslo and his assistants who do most of the work undermining the embryonic Kesler Klade. The punishment for illegal mining is seizure of all belongings and banishment under pain of death.

3. GAMBLING HOUSE
"Blue Heaven" is a D'Serris concern, though not exclusively staffed by family members. Three shasts, twelve waiters/waitresses, and eight dealers provide the service. Order is maintained by eight D'Serris stationed on a balcony above the gaming tables and drinking booths. Despite rumours to the contrary, manager Coop D'Serris runs a straight game (mostly). A small number of rooms are available for rent, but they are out of the price range of the average Keslerite. The bulk of paying customers comes from merchants and other travellers.

4. D'SERRIS STABLES
Family members and guests at "Blue Heaven" stable their thombo here (you can ground-spike them in the open of course, but they may not be there when you wake up). It is the only building in Kesler large enough to house a bochigon, though they aren't often called on to do so. Simeon Muster is the head stableboy. He does a bit of spying on behalf of Nimrod Whelihan; Whelihan has led the boy to believe that he is tracking Jazmine D'Serris' movements because he is romantically interested in her.

Thombo



5. RESIDENCE
Pallimo Tahar [see 6] lives here with the current favourite employee.

6. THE BATH HOUSE
Pollimo Tahar is the proprietor, supervising over a dozen workers in the baths and the laundry service. Patrons remove their outer clothes in cubicles before entering a common area where the attendants pour water from large ceramic jugs and vintch gourds over the customer; soap costs extra, and patrons must wash themselves unless they make special arrangements with Tahar. Patrons not wishing to splash out on soap will be given bone 'half-moons' to scrape away the dirt. Careful watch of one's belongings is advised, as the local githerin ("Khodren cloak-strippers") will be quick to take advantage of unguarded goods. Tahar is protective of the staff, and will not tolerate groping of the employees unless it has been paid for. Woe betide the scrubbing attendant who makes free-lance arrangments, and the customer who accepts the offer. Tahar is apolitical, and will support any movement or personality likely to bring trade into the area.

7. BARBER SHOP
This is usually the next stop after the bath house for people who have spent weeks or months 'in the field'. Nimrod Whelihan has been running the shop since last Eris, when the previous owner was hit in the head by a dreglammon spawn. Nimrod offers hair cuts, shaves, and polishes for buckles, buttons, and boots. Since learsis are uncommon in the area he will also pull teeth, stitch wounds, and apply a scedri cloth as long as the customer can pay. Nimrod occasionally has a supply of arrigish, and since barbering is an ancient and traditional occupation he may also offer goseen ("something for the weekend sir?...").

8. RESIDENCE
Nimrod Whelihan [see 7] is renting this property from Treven LaLoosh [see 20].

9. RESIDENCE
Empty, or the Sholari should add an NPC personality/business of their own design.

10. FLOP HOUSE
Hoblin Bland provides 30 low bunks for humans, two large matresses for large humanoids (will sleep three humans) and hammocks for maudra. No other amenities are available, though tenants will be woken at dawn by Bland thumping a gong, and in the middle of the night by Bland singing Khodren mining songs. Higher rates are charged for those beds not underneath a hole in the roof.

Beagre

11. RESIDENCE
Sally Rashaan [see 22] lives here when she is not sleeping in the stables. She allows Simeon Muster [see 4] to stay here when she is not using the rooms.

12. RESIDENCE
Coombs McGinty's house [see 15]. The owner of Coombs Tomb lives with his family and a few 'cousins' who happen to be fugitives from the law of other realms.

13. VERIAN 'VARIOUS'
Verian does the jobs in Kesler that no-one else will do - cleaning the outhouse troughs, disposing of dead bodies, and chasing beagre. Despite an unsocial occupation Various seems

to know an inordinate amount of gossip, and is on good terms with Gideon [see 16]. It is less well known that Various is Kesler's best human expert on Crugar etiquette. If he does not have too many funerals on (usually meaning a trip down a fast running river in a barrel for the deceased) Various may be able to spare some crystal dust.

14. OUTFITTER
Ferrit Lunt and his kin were Kesler's first outfitters and suppliers before Treven LaLoosh arrived with greater capital and better contacts. Ferrit feels aggrieved at this, and has complained to the D'Serris; he may 'embroider' his complaints if he feels that the D'Serris are willing to take Treven down a peg or two (which he figures is likely if they get wind of his guiding hand on the Kesler Klade). Ferrit Lunt is a feud waiting to happen.

15. COOMBS TOMB (ILLIDGE)
So named because of the poor lighting and musty odour associated with this bar. Coombs McGinty stocks rusper and whall, and brews a strong beverage on the premises from Temauntro 'whispering grass' (the trick is to remove the poisoned bulbs at the right time). Only the very adventurous or the very stupid would chance a cup of Whisperer before it was passed fit by Coombs. The Tomb attracts a variety of clientele, that is to say a variety of shady clientele. Card games will often be in progress, with the poor lighting blamed for many a 'misunderstanding'. Outright violence is not usually a feature of a night at The Tomb however. Patrons joke that a lothern would fall to it's knees just by putting it's head into the common room. Coombs is a shrewd gangster, and wouldn't like any sort of law and order to descend on Kesler.

16. CLEP
"Gideon & Son" is the local clep, though the son of Gideon Phenel was taken from the mountain side by a duradon last year. Gideon imports from Auklin and Carrisey, mainly dealing in food-stuffs and luxury items (like chote leaves for the outhouses) that are unavailable locally. Gideon runs a food stand from the side of his shop when there is demand for it, selling hot spiced soup and jorbus mash fritters. Although many prospectors leave the town during Crith, the service is particularly welcome for those that stay and brave the cold nights. Gideon does not particularly like the D'Serris as they demand free food for their night watch.

17. OTHELLO'S (INCLEP)
The biggest inclep in town, and only one of two three storey buildings. It is also the only structure (except the well) to be walled in. Othello's boasts the widest selection of drinks of all Kesler's hostelries and has decent accomodation on the upper floors. Some of the rooms even have locks not accessible to the local githerin. Othello Nesby can be found in a back room, giving orders to his staff and appearing busy even while doing nothing. A bejewelled Corastin, Chardin, acts as bouncer. He has a fierce head butt and shoulders that could carry a horse. Anyone attempting to use lethal force in Othello's will be met with lethal force in kind. Othello's has roomy stables across the courtyard, which is guarded by caji. Twice a year Othello, Chardin, and Sally Rashaan [see 22] leave town to watch the territorial battles of Croid on the edge of the Doben-al. At these times the inclep is run by Terpy Cleve, Othello's right hand man. There is speculation that Cleve is unhappy with the pup's share of the profits and is looking to move up by defection or take-over. The next croid trip could be a perfect time.

18. HIDEWORKER/ODD JOB MAN
Kane Sisson runs this establishment, dealing with everything from harness and tack of thombos to good quality cobbling and the odd bit of weapon repair and knife sharpening. Once a year his brother visits from Jasp, bringing slutch-shell helmets with extra plating for the cheek bones and chin; though these are becoming popular in games of reener, their value in Kesler is as protection during the dreglammon spawning season. Kane has only the stub left of his little finger (left hand), which he lost to a cornered beagre. He is fond of putting this up his nostril when he's had a few ruspers, thus giving the impression that he has a whole finger jammed up his nose. His wife finds this unamusing.

19. HAWMA
Ha'Chesh lives here, the last of a Crugar pawm that brokered trades between Kesler and the Crugar clans that range on the other side of the Dowtrough. Those trades, mostly for limilates, haven't happened for the past two seasons, leaving Kesler low on arrigish and thon. Ha'Clesh will not explain this sudden loss of allies, nor the overnight migration of her family into Temauntro. The last person to press the matter now wears an eye patch. Ha'Clesh is old for a Crugar, and finds the leap to the hawma entrance more and more difficult. She is proud, but her fur looks unkempt and the Crugar habit of squinting seems to have been transformed by Ha'Clesh into a permanent wince.

20. OUTFITTER/MERCHANT
Treven LaLoosh has the largest stock of mining equipment in Kesler. All manner of clothing and accessories are available here, as well as the occasional bag of crystal dust and gourd of thon. Once in a shal moon Trev is able to procure digger recos, which are obviously in great demand. He and his family does pretty well, but LaLoosh figures that he could do even better without the D'Serris around, or at least with a level playing field. Thus he is a prime mover in the Kesler Klade. He could be galvanised into action if he thinks that the South are about to retake Kesler. His daughter and son (Saress and Killian) are advocates of using force against the D'Serris, while Treven prefers using reason and good sense to gain concessions. Saress and Killian are about to begin hit 'n run tactics without their father's knowledge; illegal crystal harvesting, sabotage of the D'Serris caravan, and muggings are being planned.

21. THOMBO CORRAL
Owned by LaLoosh [see above], the Corral is cheaper than any of the stables but does not provide food. LaLoosh is often looking for guards and perhaps a beaster. Sally Rashaan [see 22] keeps some of her stock here.

22. RASHAAN STABLE
The only stabling facilities not linked to another interest (like an illidge or the D'Serris stables). Sally Rashaan

is the owner, and has a reputation as a gifted beaster. She is rumoured to have an uncanny skill in locating and striking the neck glands of Croid. The stables are wide and spacious, and Rashaan prepares feed that seems to reinvigorate tired animals. She will countenance no cruelty to thombo or lothern, and will refuse to deal with negligent or apathetic owners (this may include tauther unless they show otherwise). Rashaan has a small herd of a dozen or so thombo, which are for hire as long as the people wanting to do the hiring pass muster.

23. CAJI HOUSER
Maudra using their Tra-sense will recognise this instantly, as the sign above the door is painted with conventional dyes and with ishi ink. "The Hand of Gobey" inclep extends a welcome to all, but maudra will feel more at home thanks to the shanthic salutation (even if they can't read it - the isho emanates calm and comfort). A caji couple, Ren and Thimer Rooney, run the establishment. The decor is all draping cloth, soft lights, and subtle incense. The ceilings and furniture are low, so a human customer may have trouble avoiding the wooden beams or the mobiles of bells and tubes. Human vistors are also asked to display their naull (with the help of a naull crystal) if they can. Ren and Thimer are rumoured to have links with both Thriddle and Shantha. No evidence of the latter exists to the naked eye, but a Thriddle toy (a bobbing Crill bird that takes a mouthful of sand and shakes it out) is on the counter.

24. RESIDENCE
Toby and Tess D'Sol [see below] use this as their private abode, though it is available for more discreet meetings between clients and employees.

25. THE PERFUMERY
Kesler's only brothel, called The Perfumery due to the over indulgence in all things violently fragrant by it's workforce. Most of the prostitutes are human, though there is a boccord for those with a taste for the exotic. There is no cross-fertilisation of the human variants, so goseen is not necessary in human-boccord relations. The owners are Toby and Tess D'Sol, and order is maintained by the other Corastin in Kesler, Ginka. Ginka and Chardin [see 17] studiously avoid each other, for reasons best known to themselves. The D'Sol's are harsh masters, but streetwise characters will have seen worse. Most tastes will be catered for at The Perfumery. The life of a prostitute in North Khodre is not a happy one, and desertion is common. Jerrig between a worker and a long standing customer is not unknown but it is rare. Bronth may find The Perfumery offensive because of the overtones of enforced servitude, and boccord will likely object to a fellow boccord staining the codes of Kree by working in such a place. Toby and Tess get good trade from the D'Serris, and won't want to upset the jorbus cart.

26. BIG JACK'S (ILLIDGE)
Big Jack is not (as one might imagine) a burly toth, but a stuffed and mounted bull-mastiff large enough to have worried Joruni wolves when he was alive. "Big Jack's" shast and owner, Marlissa Timea, claims that he lived 23 years, but no-one can verify this as Marlissa is the oldest resident in Kesler and Big Jack has been sitting silently by the fireplace as long as anyone can remember. Marlissa was around long before the Burdothians took a passing interest in the frontier town (which was no more than a few houses and a durlig patch) and the entrepeneurs arrived to provide food, lodging, and other services to the miners and fortune seekers. Big Jack is a local landmark of sorts and patrons will often pat his head for luck on their way to the bar. Crugar seem to find the beast particularly distasteful, and will not

feel comfortable in "Big Jack's". If business is slow Marlissa will rent out sleeping space on the floor, but she prefers to be free of the hassle that can result from strangers fighting and thieving in the early hours. There is a small stable attached to the side of the illidge.

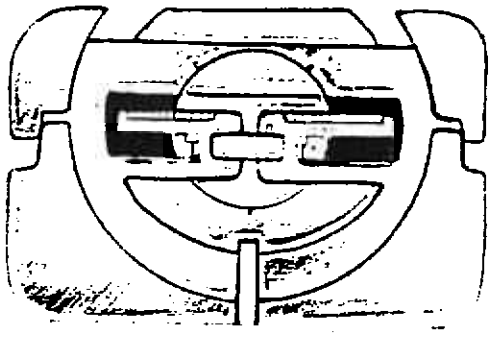
27. THE PIT (ILLIDGE)
The roughest gaff in Kesler, a place famous for free-for-alls and a meeting point for traders in recreational (sometimes deadly) limilates. Thon is more commonly available here than anywhere else, but it is rarely pure. Thike fighters are occasionally brought in from Auklin to put on a show, duelling it out in the central depression that gives the illidge it's name. The owner, Kim Jinnder, is a former Sherja herself, and has lost nothing in speed or ferocity since her retirement. Jinnder encourages the mayhem at The Pit and seems not to care that it costs her plenty in repairs. The wilder rumours attribute this to a secret benefactor who may have need of The Pit's ever ready brawlers. The truth may be that Jinnder is simply an unhinged nihilist.

28. RESIDENCE
Empty, a lease is available from the D'Serris, who hope to interest a merchant in setting up a business in Kesler.

29. RESIDENCE
Ned Simpter lives here [see below], next to his pride and joy.

30. WELL
Neddigan "Lightning" Simpter operates the well, which he dug five years ago. Ned is the only Burdothian resident in Kesler, and he still gets ribbed for his strange accent. He was an engineer with the original mining expeditions and stayed behind after an accident left both his forearms streaked with white scar tissue (hence the nickname). He will not talk about how he came to be injured, nor will he give directions to crystal strikes or advice on mining ore. Ned charges reasonable rates for reasonably clean water. The alternative is to trek half a mile to the nearest stream, which is inconvenient and sometimes dangerous (those rocks that the water flows around so prettily can turn out to be a crafty dreglammon - look out for the nostrils above water).

31. KERNING BAY
Known simply as "The Bay" this is a stone igloo with just one entrance. The bay is built into the ground three levels deep, excavated by dyshas some years ago. Jessi Gwynn makes a small charge for kerning here, which can be vital in the isho storms that sometimes come rolling over the Dowtrough. Due to the crystalline strata around Kesler the isho geography is also unstable, and crystal hunting can be a very dangerous occupation. Ground holes radiate around the bay for about 40 feet; these provide ventilation for the chambers below ground, and in the event of frantic kerning the odd isho geyser has emanated from them. Hitting the thombo saddle hard doesn't even come close...



ENCOUNTERS AROUND KESLER

1. THE EXCAVATOR
About 10 miles out of town a hulk of twisted metal, frayed wires, and shattered plastic lies half buried in a small canyon. The ground around it seems to have opened and closed upon the machine, crushing it with enough force to render it unsalvageable. It's original shape is hard to tell, but the black and yellow joints of one huge mechanical arm can be made out, as can a few broken lights and hydraulic supports.

It is believed to be the remains of a tec-ton Excavator, abandoned by the Burdothians perhaps a decade ago. Why they didn't remove the parts (or attempt to use I-tec) isn't known. Local caji hint that perhaps the tec-ton and its crew chanced upon a shanthic dwelling place underground or some other sacred site, and that the Excavator was destroyed with a crundorra or by powerful dyshas. No-one has attempted to disprove this by meddling with the remains (or at least no-one has done so and told of it).

The tec-ton lies beneath the hot sun in its twisted death-throes; it looks both eerie and impressive as Du rises, bathing the machine and the surrounding landscape in soft amber light.

2. TISSLE FLIES
These are flying enervors that resemble large (18" span) butterflies of an almost translucent orange. They move in enormous, silent schools, abosrbing isho from the surrounding landscape. They will attack isho laden creatures, swiftly engulfing the isho source and covering the target in dozens of squirming 'butterflies'. This is rarely fatal for human sized or larger creatures, but it is certainly unnerving and can be dangerous if they catch a target in a precarious position or disrupt breathing for too long. Khodren veterans will sometimes wear a leather face mask so they can still breathe if they are unexpectly swarmed upon by a tissle school.

Perhaps the biggest danger of tissle flies is that they can precipitate the arrival of duradon; these ill-tempered fliers will follow a tissle fly school with mouths wide open to catch the plentiful food; a duradon is unlikely to detect the smothered Isho Signature of anyone covered by a a mass of tissle flies.

3. DREGLAMMON
The rocky ground and hills of Kesler and environs are perfect camouflage for Dreglammon, who can be a danger to lone individuals and small groups. They seem to have adapted to the presence of the mining communities and sometimes lie in wait in the mountain streams; many bleary-eyed miners have become dreglammon victims while stooping to fill their waterskins. It is best to avoid any unfamiliar rock formations or stepping stones. In the spawning season it is advisable to wear sturdy head protection.

4. CRUGAR
The Crugar used to come into Kelser to trade, but encounters with patrols will be (at the very least) tense. The Crugar have a number of grievances, notably human infrigement upon their clan territories and limilate pastures. Agents of Saress Khodre have made sure that the Crugar are well aware of their rights. There are also those simply being paid to raise a little hell...

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Mining Around Kesler
I haven't provided any detailed notes for mining either ore or crystal. Crystal hunting may be a convenient hook to get tauther into town but once there it would be easy for them to become embroiled in Kesler's social life and conflicts. Hiding crystal from the D'Serris is another factor to consider if the players want to haul sacks of Desti out of town. Kesler isn't intended be a bottomless crystal well, and it is in decline as a crystal source anyway.

I've left out discussions of assaying, smelting, and transportation of large amounts of ore; this would take machinery and manpower beyond the reach of most tauther or drenn, and is really the province of the departed Burdothians. The only exception may be galti ore, which tauther will look for if they want to cut and prepare their own crystals.

Level of Force
The Sholari should tailor specific skills and weapon use to the level of the party. The D'Serris should be able to hold their own (at least) against the party; if your players have blasters counter them with something else, but stunners or field rams may be a better idea than more destructive firepower. A caji mercenary or two skilled in Gobey would be another idea. I've left stats and dysha levels alone for this reason, though a town full of tough cookies just to hamper a strong group of PCs would seem a bit strange.

Good Guys and Bad Guys
No-one is wholly good or bad in Kesler, it just depends on your point of view. It's easier to have the D'Serris wear the black hats, but it's this group that would have the backing of Burdothian agents (at least for now). When it all the hits the fan they're as likely to be left high and dry as anyone else. The D'Serris aren't evil, they're just greedy.

The Kesler Klade can play Robin Hood to the D'Serris' Sheriff of Nottingham, but again the Sholari could make things more complicated. They'll side with the power most likely to gain victory, and thus could come under the heel of Saress Khodre. Replacing one group of tyrants with another isn't necessarily progress. Alternatively, the Keslerites could join forces with other towns and try to declare themselves independent. Could be messy, just check out the former Soviet republic.

There are a number of wild cards in Kesler, not least the players themselves. No real details of the thieves, con-men, and claim jumpers are provided, but these types of characters could provide good scenario hooks. Kesler is a small town but that doesn't mean it's boring.

Currency
I haven't made a distinction between Burdothian crystal currency and Khodres metal coinage. Yules and links would probably be acceptable tender, but tauther proffering them would be expected to pay more for goods and services. They would also mark themselves out as foreigners or tourists (which is worse). In any event Kesler's prices should be higher for certain goods, working on the 'oasis principle' - analogous to many a motorway service station and the fleecing they do, because there's nowhere else for miles to buy the same goods. Tauther looking for jobs will find them easily enough, but the choice of employers could turn out to be important.

You Looking At Me?
The Crugar have been touched upon, and if the Sholari wishes they can play a fuller part in the campaign. The Crugar clans are split into three main groups (which sometimes overlap) - agents of Saress Khodre, neutrals, and those with genuine grievances over theft of resources and limilates. Any expedition into Temauntro is fraught with danger as the players won't know which group they're dealing with, or in the first instance that these groups exist. General Crugar interaction skills won't cut it if tauther cross into the 'Large Land', they'd better know exactly what's what in Crugar etiquette and ritual. Young cats will be hot to prove themselves with those hooked swords.

Scenario Hooks
The party could be fortune seekers trying to dodge the D'Serris, limilate hunters increasing the danger by risking life and limb in Temauntro, Burdothian agents sent to prop up the Carrisey puppets, Khodren agents making a rendezvous with Whelihan, thriddle employees gathering information on human politics, traders or githerin out for a fast buck, caji investigating the rumours of shantha and the isho structure on the Khodren/Temauntro faultline, condrij escorting a caravan through the mountains, entris sent to broker peace between Crugar and humans, or Iscin back to retrieve artifacts and equipment from the mining operations. Whatever you do with Kesler, I hope it provides fuel for a session or two.

Acknowledgment
The inspiration behind the basic blueprint for Kesler is the 1981 generic FRP supplement "Towns of the Outlands" by Midkemia Press. Also read (but not used) was the article 'In a Cavern, In a Canyon' from Dragon #152. This deals with mining in FRP campaigns and is useful for information on large scale smelting and the ways in which metal ore are detected above ground. Sholari may wish to add an abandoned ore refinery on the outskirts of Kesler, or further afield as a place to explore and pick over; making one operational could be a long term goal. Unless stated otherwise business people in Kesler live on their premises.

THE WEAPONSMITH

New Skills and a New Occupation for Jorune Gamers

Weapon-making and armouring are mentioned at various times in the 3rd edition rulebook, but no skill exists to define just what such a person can and cannot do. This article provides such skills, and an occupation to go with them.

NEW SKILLS

WEAPONSMITH, [HARD]
This skill covers the process of making hand-held weapons and bows. For the sake of convenience it includes aspects of skills that would usually be classed as belonging to a bowyer. Sholari's are free to define this skill separately if they feel it will help game balance. Variable skill levels are listed below.

Unfamiliar: Can construct makeshift non-metal weapons (made of bone, wood, etc.), string and repair a bow. Can assemble and disassemble basic weapons.

Familiar: Can make solid, workable non-metals weapons eg. staves, clubs, and bone knives, and basic metals weapons eg. swords, spear heads. Can assemble and disassemble a varitey of weapons.

Experienced: Can construct good (ie. saleable) metal weapons, including polearms. Can construct crossbows. May have a knowledge of the workings of some Earth-Tec weapons, and a grasp of the processes involved in making shanthic blades.

Seasoned: Can make superior metals and non-metal weapons, and crossbows. Knows how to make shanthic blades, but lacks hands-on experience (and may need help of shantha or caji). Sholari's discretion on expertise with rifles, turrets, and scopes.

ARMOURER [HARD]
The variable skill levels are:

Unfamiliar: Can make repairs to leather armours, helmets, shields. Needs the help of a tanner for complicated work.

Familiar: Can construct leather armours, helmets, hand-guards, graves, and shields. Can repair mail armour and has a grasp of crystal armouring and some of the properties of Earth-Tec armours.

Experienced: Can make mail armour, metal helmets, and crystal armour (may need caji help). Has knowledge of the processes involved in making locurian grunder and thailierian armour. Knows about some specific Earth-Tec armourings.

Seasoned: Can make superior metal and non-metal armours, helmets, and shields. Can prepare locurian grunder. Knows how to make thailierian armour but lacks hands-on experience (and may need the help of shantha or caji). Sholari's discretion of experience with a MAS or Force Walls.

NEW OCCUPATION

WEAPONSMITH Cost 6

Extra Characteristic Points +2
Extra Skill Rank Points +1

Min Strength 13
Min Spot 12
Min Learn 12

One at Experienced, other at Familiar
* Weaponsmith
* Armourer

* 1 Weapon at Experienced
* 1 Weapon at Familiar
* Tanning at Familiar
* Art (Carve/Sculpt) at Familiar
* Bargain at Familiar
* Earth-Tec (Basic) at Familiar
* History (Military) at Familiar
* Lore (Warfare) at Familiar

Choose 1, roll D6, 6 = choose another
* Underground Info at Familiar
* Military Etiquette at Familiar
* Thivin Etiquette at Familiar
* Contacts at Familiar
* Arithmetic at Familiar
* Pistol at Familiar

NOTES
The Weaponsmith/Armourer is something of a hybrid - part craftsman, part fighter, part merchant. Not all weaponsmiths will have exactly the same expertise, and the skill could vary from race to race.

1. Maudra weaponsmiths will be interested in the processes of crystal armouring, grunder, and the integration of crystals (eg, boc-rods) into weaponry. They may use improvisations of dyshas such as Fire Touch and Quantum to aid the forging process.

2. Human smiths are more likely to want to gravitate to Earth-Tec. The Sholari may wish to restrict knowledge of some Earth-Tec weaponry, or even classify this as a province of specialist Iscin working for the Burdothian military. This is more likely if the smith belongs to a Klade (who may have their own specialised weapons...).

3. Specialist smiths may be most adept at producing the large weapons, especially two-handed swords. They would be on good terms with boccord. Similarly, a smith may have an exclusive agreement with Corastin, and specialise in making their lethal clubs.

4. Thivin smiths conceivably have an edge in making traditional weapons. A Thivin smith commands an extra 500 gemules for a weapon (see the "Sholari's Companion"), minimum. The Sholari may want to make Thivin weapons more durable, or better weighted.

5. Shanthic smiths are the sole province of the Sholari. You may not want to give PCs access to them.

ERRATA
1. The 3rd edition is a bit confused over mail armour. On page 84 it states that "Mail armour is very uncommon on Jorune..." and then on page 176 we have "Mail armour is relatively common." I'd go with the former statement, since Jorune is scarce in many metals.

2. As an optional rule you may want to include weapon breakage as a factor in combat. On a defence roll of 20 or when an attacker makes a roll of 1 against a succesful defence, a weapon may break on an 18-20 on D20. Thivin weapons may only break on a 20.

NOTES & QUERRIDS

This section provides a forum for discussing the 3rd edition rules, the cultures and peoples of Jorune, and just about anything else that comes to mind. The idea is that I'll pose a few questions and print the replies from other readers in the next issue. Everyone is welcome to contribute, either in reply to a question/problem or by putting a question of their own. Maybe a few of these will be the seeds of future articles, you never know....

1. **MAPS.** There is a baffling lack of scale on the maps in the 3rd edition rules; nothing on the world map, Burdoth and Heridoth, Ardoth, or Es'Wother. Companion:Ardoth gives a scale of 3" = 1 mile for the Ardoth maps and the 2nd edition gives a 1cm = 30 miles for Burdoth, but they've been redrawn between editions. Has anyone come up with their own or extrapolated travelling distances from the text?

2. **ARDOTH GEOGRAPHY.** Concerning the geography of Ardoth: we're told that the highest point of the city is the Cryshell Citadel (which is flanked on the sea side by cliffs) and the lowest point is Vintch and Durris, which are at sea level. There is also a steep incline leading down to the grazing land from Dich. My problems with this are:

a) There must be a big drop between the Bazaar and Portgate (surely the port is on the seafront!). We're informed that there is a drawbridge but it can't be completely horizontal because the Bazaar is part of Cryshell.

b) The Cryshell River forks near Es'Wother and then appears to flow uphill around the Bazaar. Eh? Unless they have a series of locks I don't see how this is possible. The river has been redirected at times but the engineering isn't explained.

3. **MORE ARDOTH.** Ardoth's many city walls are described as one of the Seven Wonders of Jorune. What are the other six?

3. **TRAINING.** The Training skill is not clear, at least in how it relates to PCs receiving training. How do y'all work this one? Would there be interest in an article expanding the training rules, perhaps on similar lines to RuneQuest? This may be particularly relevant if PCs seek out fadri for specialised knowledge.

4. **SHIELDS.** Under the rules, parrying with a shield seems to be less effective than a parry/dodge with a weapon. Shields act as an extra layer of armour which must be penetrated, while a parry negates all damage. I'm not sure I buy this. Maybe shields should be more effective by countering the 'force of blows' or still protect the user in certain locations (shield arm and chest for example) even if no formal defence is possible. This would force attackers to make more 'called shots' around the shield.

5. **MAX ISHO.** The current rules concerning Max Isho increase, combined with the availability of some crytals (particularly Desti) seems open to abuse by "power gamers". A lax Sholari could have muadra characters packed with Isho points and Colour before he/she knows it if the Isho modifiers and crystals are bandied about too liberally. Copra Nebbon in "The Gire of Sillipus" is portrayed as one of Jorune's foremost Shal experts, and her skills don't look excessive to me - how does she compare with dysha slinging PCs?

6. **SIGNATURE SKILLS.** Isho sensitivity for non-dysha users still needs some clarification from where I'm sitting. I'd like to know the effective range of the Race, Mask, and False signatures. If there is unlimited range (and zero Isho cost) the phrase about limiting the use of these skills with non-dysha users (in the "Sholari's Companion") doesn't make mush sense. Also, the effect of these skills is underplayed. For example, a githerin had better be good at Mask Signature if he plans to lie in wait for a boccord, or sneaking up on anyone with Trasense in a dark alley. The Isho skills would seem to remove the benefits of stealth in many cases.

7. **THRIDDLE GENDER.** Thriddle are the only race capable of distinguishing between male and female Ramian, but who distinguishes between male and female Thriddle? Is it a matter of colouration? Come to think of it, are Thriddle mammals? They walk like hopping birds, so maybe they are vaguely avian. Are they egg laying creatures? Maybe Thriddle Madness is related to some frustrated desire to mate, misunderstood by the humans who spend time with lone Thriddle. Any speculations out there?

8. **CREATURE COLOUR.** Thaillerian armour is scarlet, because it is made from Corondon bone (which therefore must be red), and grunder is grey because that's the colour of the locure, but what about other Jorune life? What colour is the common thombo? Grey? White? Dappled? How about a talmaron or a dichandra? Is there a colour group common to all native Jorune life?

9. **LARD ASS BRONTH.** On a related note, have you ever taken a close look at the physical dimensions of a Bronth? They are listed in the "Sholari's Companion" as being, on average, 6'4" and 450 lbs. Compare that with a Corastin's 10' and 450 lbs, and I think you're looking at a hefty biped. Bronth are usually illustrated with Apollonian bodies, but they're probably more like Winnie the Pooh than Mr Universe. Shake your booty indeed.

A human in old style Thaillerian Armor

JORUNE PRODUCTS

SKYREALMS OF JORUNE, 3rd edition, 216 pages, 14.99
The basic rulebook, and extremely good value. Excellent art by Miles Teves, and a goodly number of words per page. Split broadly into two sections for players and GMs (the 'Sholari'). Contains the revised Tauther Guide; a first-person look at the background of the world, and the adventuring process embodied in the Tauther/Drenn system, as narrated by various human and non-human guides. Also the chapters on character creation (much improved in both concept and execution from the 2nd edition), combat, and Isho (the 'magic' system). The Sholari Guide takes up the last half of the book, detailing the races and cultures of Jorune, the planet, equipment, history, and a mini-campaign in the planet's largest city, Ardoth.

There are the usual glitches and typos in this book, but it is an absolute pleasure to read. The notes on the sentient fauna of Jorune teem with adventure ideas, and for the players the Tauther Guide is a classic. If you don't want to GM or play Jorune after reading this you're probably dead.

THE SHOLARI PACK, GM screen/32 page module/80 page GM companion, 10.99
The most useful supplement so far, in fact the only one that is indispensable. The Sholari Companion is an eclectic mix - errata pages (had to happen), an in-depth Jorune timeline, variants on character generation, new skills, new character sheets, Jorune calender (full moons illustrated) and a solo scenario. The comprehensive glossary is very welcome and some of the entries are enough to spark a scenario, plus there's the useful Gazeteer and a list of Important Names in Joruni History. You should find a use for almost everything here, which isn't that common when you think about it.

The adventure, 'Voyage of the Aylon Star', concerns a trip on a crystal-schooner out of Jasp. Not a great scenario in and of itself, but the maps, floorplans, and history of Jasp ensure that it will remain in use after the adventure has been completed. In fact the Aylon Star could be used as a convenient hook to hang the Sholari's own adventures on. The GM screen is what you'd expect, but it is genuinely useful at times.

INNOCENTS OF GAUSS, 32 page scenario, 6.99
The first module for the 3rd edition, and a disappointment. The problem is that the adventure is targeted toward beginning players, which seems odd to me as Jorune could be unfathomable to the beginning gamer. That's not elitism it's the truth, you just have to remember how strange and complicated AD&D looked way back when. Anyway, as a result the plot is the old cliched 'help the village' one (a kidnapping no less), and it's just not executed very well; ludicrously easy clues, Jorune fauna on show as mere cannon fodder, and the reckless bandying about of both Earth-tec and Isho manifestations. Not good, but get it if you must have everything (if you're like me in other words).

THE GIRE OF SILLIPUS, 64 page scenario/sourcebook, 9.50
This is better, and actually written by the same guy responsible for 'Innocents..'. The book deals with the island of Sillipus, a lawless haven for Gire pirates, slavers, and other ugly mugs. In some ways it's slightly tepid (no mention of prostitution or illegal drug use), but the scenario should occupy a group of PCs for a while and, again, the background material can be extended for a longer running campaign. You may want to bolt 'Thieves World' on top of it for that grungy feel though.

THE SOBAYID ATLAS, 60 page supplement, 11.99
I haven't actually got this yet, mainly thanks to a lovely letter from TV licensing, asking if we had one. We have now. As far as I know this deals with the Sobayid area, one of the provinces of Burdoth, providing a different starting point for PCs and detailing the region's cities, local populations, and critters, plus a new maudra sect and their custom dyshas.

JORUNI NEWS

SKYREALMS LICENCE "IN STASIS"!
I don't want to be alarmist, especially in this debut issue, but the news from Chessex is that SoJ is on hold while the licence holders "re-organise". This I assume means that SkyRealms Publishing is changing its operation. I'd guess that US fanzine "Sholari" would have the latest on this (being edited by SkyRealms guy Joe Coleman) but I've yet to get hold of a copy. Chessex are still keen to promote SoJ "...in any way [they] can" so that's good news.

I remember reading in "Last Province" #4 that Wizards of the Coast big cheese Peter Adkinson had his eye on Jorune before WotC snapped up Talislanta. Maybe they'll move in...

Miles Teves has moved onto a variety of new projects, which would support the theory that SkyRealms are jiggling staff about (well, not literally shaking them or anything). First prize in the Eagle Eyes competition goes to Matthew Pook, who spotted Mr Teves credited as an artist on the film "Congo".

SKYREALMS OF JORUNE HITS CD-ROM
OK, not exactly up to date news, but since I discovered this by accident I'm quite excited about it. "Alien Logic", a CD-ROM RPG set on Jorune, is published by SSI and costs $50.00 in the US. I'm told it is available over here but I've never seen it, and couldn't play it even if I had. According to the review in 'Computer Gaming World' the graphics, interface, and background are superb, but the dialogue and plot are pretty naff. Must be worth getting just to see what all things Joruni look like in full colour, not to mention a detailed representation of Ardoth. If anyone is out there playing this I'd appreciate it if you'd drop me a review.

THEY'RE BACK, AND THIS TIME THEY'RE REALLY RATHER MIFFED
Rumours are flying about a Lamorri campaign, though whether this is the Lekers house campaign or a planned scenario pack I don't know. I must admit to a soft spot for this mysterious interstellar race, and they figure briefly in a Mark Rhein scenario in Canadian prozine "Adventures Unlimited". Guess it's time to break out the She Evid and stuff that Thoo'Sa where the alien sun don't shine.